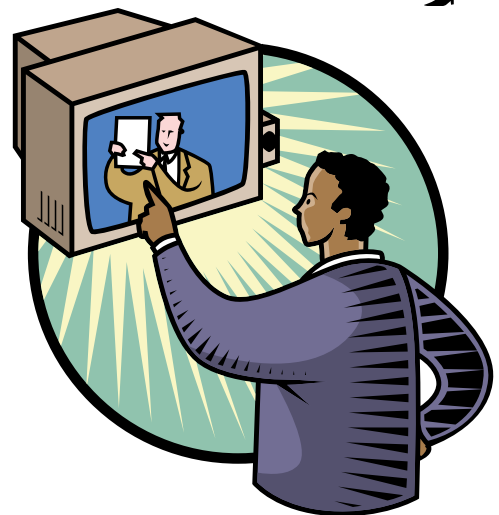
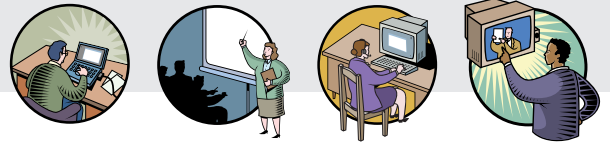


Reviewing the Learning Package





Reviewing the Learning Package

Despite planning with storyboards, it is quite common for authors to want to change aspects of the learning package once they see and use it in its final form. Sometimes things don't flow in the way that you might have expected or pages have too much text or too few diagrams or interactions. Reviewing the package once it has been developed is an important part of the overall development process and can improve the package's effectiveness with your learners.

Hints and Tips

The kinds of things we want to check for are:

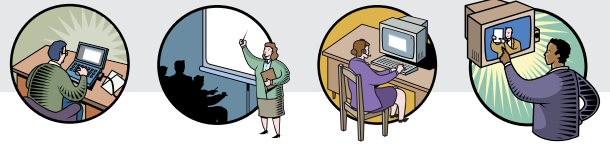
- spelling and grammar.
- technical problems (e.g. broken links).
- factual errors.
- level of materials.
- usability.

So how do you set about evaluating your learning package? This can take many different forms ranging from a simple review to more in-depth evaluations and learner pilots. At the very least you should get someone other than yourself to go through the learning package. This will probably pick up problems like spelling and grammar and any navigation or technical problems. Materials not working on certain web browsers or computer platforms (e.g. Windows vs. Mac) is an example of a typical technical problem. If your independent reviewer is also a subject expert then any factual errors will be picked up. If the subject expert also teaches then you should get good feedback regarding the level of the materials. In other words, is the content pitched at a suitable level for the learners it is intended for?

Usability

The usability of your learning package can have a significant effect on your learners' experience. Usability is basically how easy a system is to use. A package with good usability is easy to learn and remember, efficient, visually pleasing and quick to recover from errors. Some examples of bad usability are poor icon design, unclear navigation and bad colour combinations (e.g. red text on a blue background). To evaluate the first four items on our Hints and Tips list it was enough for someone to look through your materials and send you some comments. While this is also possible for usability, it is generally accepted that observational evaluation is much more effective when trying to eliminate usability problems.

To conduct observational evaluation with your learning package you review how your package is used. Ideally this process will be carried out with representative of the learners who will eventually be using this package. The learners should work through the learning package (you may want to ask them to complete certain sections or tasks) and as they do so they should be encouraged to think aloud. They should talk about what they are trying to do, why they take an action and what they think is happening. As an evaluator you shouldn't intervene although sometimes it may be necessary in order to continue with the evaluation. The information to be gained from this kind of evaluation is really valuable



Tutor Quote

"I welcomed the opportunity to revisit my learning package. The iterative process improved the quality of the learning experience and will be useful for future developments."

and can often reveal problems you would never have thought of. Some of the issues we identified in our project are highlighted in the Design Considerations section of the **Storyboarding** guideline.

Some usability and navigation issues may be due to the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) your package is being delivered in. While you cannot do anything about these issues directly, your VLE support team will find the feedback very useful.

Of course, once you have completed your evaluation, whether it is a simple review or detailed evaluation, you should use the findings to make improvements to your learning package. The following are some useful links related to this document.

Quality Assurance

The JISC-funded QA Focus group

<http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/qa-focus/>

Usability

Ten Usability Heuristics

http://www.useit.com/papers/heuristic/heuristic_list.html

These guidelines were produced as part of the JISC-funded project X4L Healthier Nation. You can find out about JISC at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/>, the X4L Programme at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=programme_x4l and X4L Healthier Nation at <http://extranet.lauder.ac.uk/x4l/>.